

REMARKS

The application has been reviewed in light of the Office Action dated March 31, 2008. Claims 1-58 are pending in this application, with claims 1, 12, 18, 24, 28, 39, 50, and 51 being in independent form. By the present Amendment, claims 1, 12, 18, 24, 28, 39, 50 and 51 have been amended. It is submitted that no new matter has been added and no new issues have been raised by the present Amendment.

Applicants acknowledge the Examiner's determination that claims 31, 33-36, 42, 44-47, 54, 55, 56, and 58 represent allowable subject matter and would be allowable if rewritten in independent form.

Claims 1-11 and 50 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as allegedly anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 5,987,632 (Irrinki). Claims 12-15, 18-21, 28, 32, 39, 43, 50, 51, and 57 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as allegedly obvious over Irrinki in view of U.S. Patent No. 5,710,550 (Hseih). Claims 16, 17, 22, 23, 37, 38, 48, and 49 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as allegedly obvious over Irrinki in view of Hseih and U.S. Patent No. 5,361,232 (Petschauer). Claims 24-27, 29, 40, and 52 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as allegedly obvious over Irrinki in view of Hseih and U.S. Patent No. 4,173,029 (Rabindran). Claims 30, 41, and 53 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as allegedly obvious over Irrinki in view of Hseih, Rabindran and Microsoft Computer Dictionary, fifth edition (Dictionary).

Applicants would like to thank Examiner Manoskey for conducting a telephonic interview with Applicants' undersigned representative on June 3, 2008. During this interview, the patentability of independent claim 1 over the cited art was discussed, and while no agreements were made as to allowable claim language, an understanding was reached that if the

claims were amended to differentiate between the way Irrinki blows a fuse to permanently cut power to failed memory cells and the way the present Application turns off power to the memory cells not selected for testing, then the Examiner would reconsider the rejection of these claims in light of Irrinki.

Independent claims 1, 12, 18, 24, 28, 39, 50, and 51 have been amended hereby and literal support for the amendments made may be found in the original specification, for example, on page 9, line 16, though page 10, line 5.

The Examiner contends that Irrinki teaches turning off power to the remaining memory cells because Irrinki, at column 9, lines 26-61, relates to blowing fuses to individual rows and columns. However, the cited portions of Irrinki, best illustrated at Step 550, Figure 5, relates to blowing fuses to individual rows and columns for those memory cells that have already been tested and have been determined to be failing cells. By blowing the fuses to the failing cells, the “failures that may only exist under a particular set of operating conditions” are converted to “functional failures.” In a sense, Irrinki performs a stress test on the cells and those cells that fail the stress test are cut off by blowing the respective fuses so that weak cells do not fail later on.

In independent claim 1, as amended, “power voltage [is restored] to memory cells not selected for testing, in a normal operation mode.” This feature is useful in the present claim because the remaining memory cells not selected for testing generally include functional memory cells, and it is desirable to restore power to these functional memory cells after testing.

Because Irrinki cuts power to the failing memory cells by blowing a fuse, it is not possible in Irrinki to restore power to these memory cells during a normal operation mode, as claimed in independent claim 1. Moreover, Irrinki teaches away from restoring power to these

cells because in Irrinki it is only the failing memory cells that power has been cut off for and it would not be desirable to restore power to failed memory cells. This stands in contrast to independent claim 1 where the memory cells for which power has been turned off during testing generally include functional cells.

Accordingly, Irrinki fails to teach or suggest that “power voltage [is restored] to memory cells not selected for testing in a normal operation mode.” Moreover, the remainder of the cited art fails to teach or suggest this claim element and the Office Action does not assert that it does. Accordingly, independent claim 1 is patentably distinct from the cited art for at least this reason. Similarly, dependent claims 2-11 are patentably distinct at least owing to their dependency upon independent claim 1.

Similarly, in independent claims 12, 18, 24, 28, 39, and 51, “in a normal operation mode, power is restored to the memory cells not selected for testing” and in independent claim 50, “power-supply [is restored] to the remaining memory cells not selected for testing, in a normal operation mode.” For at least reasons similar to those discussed above with respect to independent claim 1, independent claims 12, 18, 24, 28, 39, 50, and 51 are patentably distinct from the cited art. Similarly, dependent claims 13-17, 19-23, 25-27, 29-38, 40-49, and 52-58 are patentably distinct from the cited art at least owing to their dependence upon independent claims 12, 18, 24, 28, 39, and 51, respectively.

Favorable reconsideration is earnestly solicited.

Respectfully submitted,

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